ليـــوا للتعليم
Liwa Education

مدرســـة لـــيـــوا الـــدولـــيـــة
Liwa International School
الـقـطـارة Al Qattara

2026-2027

School Governance Policy Document

AY 26/27

August 2026

Effective Date: Aug 2026
Review Date: Yearly

Liwa Education School Governance

1. Governance Rules

Liwa International School Al Qattara (LISQ) will:

Publish their Governance Rules on the school website and include the following:

a. The overall governance structure.

b. The terms of reference and membership of the governing board.

c. The scheme of delegation to any committees or individuals

d. The terms of reference and membership of any committees.

e. The procedure for appointing members to the governing board and committees.

f. The criteria for selection of board members.

g. The competencies and skillsets expected of board members.

h. Voting and Decision-Making:

1.1 Decisions made by the Governing Board will usually be reached by consensus and after due discussion. However, where a vote is required, decisions shall be made on the basis of a majority of those attending and voting at a meeting where quorum is achieved.

1.2 Only voting members are authorized to cast a vote. Principals and any other non-voting members shall not have voting rights (except if a student representative is given that right).

1.3 In the event of an equal number of votes being cast, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

2. Governing Board

2.1 Liwa Schools appoint a governing board, which is the senior authority and governing body of the school, in line with ADEK's requirements.

2.2 The governing board shall consist of at least 5 voting members, 1 non-voting member, and a maximum of 15 members (commensurate with the size school), including the Chair**.**

2.3 Members of the Governing Board:

2.3.1 Voting Members: The governing board shall comprise the following voting members:

a. The owner of the school shall be an ex-ofcio member and act as the Chair.

b. Parent Representative: The governing board shall include at least one parent representative, elected by the parents of the school. Parent members are

expected to represent the interests of the parent body, and not their own personal interests or the specific interests of their child(ren).

c. Teacher Representative: The governing board shall include at least one teacher representative, elected by the teaching staff of the school. Teacher members are expected to represent the interests of the teaching body, and not to defend their own personal interests.

d. Independent Members: The governing board shall include at least 1 external independent member, appointed by the board, who has considerable experience and expertise in the education sector.

The governing board is also encouraged to appoint an external independent member who is a representative of local business, to support the school in achieving its objectives.

2.3.2 The governing board includes the Principal as a non-voting member. The Principal shall attend the meetings of the governing board to provide advice, respond to questions, and deliver reports regarding the school's operations and performance.

a. If the Principal is unable to attend a meeting, the Vice Principal attends it on their behalf.

b. The Principal or Vice Principal do not attend any meeting of the governing board where the board is discussing the performance or remuneration of the Principal or at any other time when the Chair deems the Principal's presence to be inappropriate.

2.3.3 Liwa schools include student voice in their reports to the Governing body. Should the governing body thus decide, the school will include at least 1 Cycle 3 student representative as a member of the governing board. Any such representative will have a demonstratable history of leadership and be elected by the student body to represent them. Any student representative will be a non-voting member; their presence and participation in board meetings is at the Chair's discretion.

2.4 Each member of the governing board shall adhere to the governing board's collective responsibilities, as set out in the Terms of Reference below (see Section 2.10 Terms of Reference). No member shall bear personal liability for any decision taken unless the decision is found to have lacked integrity (e.g., arising from a conflict of interest).

2.5 Liwa Schools will ensure that:

2.5.1 The procedures for appointing or electing members to the governing board are clear and transparent.

2.5.2 When appointing members to the governing board, the continuity and institutional knowledge of the board are preserved.

2.5.3 Members of the governing board possess a good conduct certificate and are familiar with the UAE national identity and cultural values.

2.5.4 Members have the appropriate and relevant skills, qualifications, experience, and expertise to fulfill their roles, and the board (as a whole) has an appropriate balance of skills and experience.

a. The Governance Rules require board members to have relevant skills and competencies: the ability and willingness to learn, communication skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, and a collaborative mindset.
b. Potential board members who possess relevant areas of expertise outside of education include law, financial management, social services/ student wellbeing and protection, human resources, marketing, project design and construction for example will be encouraged to become members of the governing body.

2.6 Liwa Schools will ensure that:

2.6.1 With the exception of the owner, the service term of a member of the governing board is limited to a maximum of 3 years. Any appointment to an additional term will occur only in accordance with the school's Governance Rules.

2.6.2 If a member does not complete their term, a replacement member will be appointed for the remainder of the service term, in accordance with the selection process.

2.7 Any meeting of the governing board shall have at least two-thirds of board members in attendance to achieve quorum.

2.8 The governing board will meet termly, at least once every three months, at the request of the Chair or the Owner of the school.

2.9 Liwa schools will hold open or closed meetings of the governing board, at the discretion of the Chair as defined below:

2.9.1 Open Meeting: Relevant stakeholders (i.e., parents and teachers) are authorized to observe the meeting. In the case of such meetings, the school will share the agenda and expectations with the attendees.

2.9.2 Closed Meeting: Only voting board members, the Principal, and individuals specifically invited by the Chair are authorized to attend the meeting.

2.9.3 Closed Executive Meeting: Only voting board members are authorized to attend the meeting.

2.10 Liwa schools' terms of reference of the governing board include the following provisions:

2.10.1 Responsibilities in relation to ADEK:

a. Ensure that the school operates effectively in line with ADEK's regulations, policies, and other requirements.
b. Respond to any directives issued by ADEK that require action to be taken by the school or the school governing body, for example, in relation to inspection outcomes and compliance issues.

2.10.2 Responsibilities in relation to the school:

a. Define the mission and vision of the school and ensure the school provides a high-quality of education that leads to expected educational outcomes and meets the interests of stakeholders and regulators.
b. Approve the school's strategic, developmental, and operational plans.
c. Review and approve new school policies and amendments to existing policies and ensure that all policies are regularly reviewed and up to date to be in alignment with ADEK requirements.
d. Act as the school's primary financial authority, ensuring that proper books of accounts are kept, approving the annual budget and financial statements, and bearing overall responsibility for the school's assets.
e. Delegate authority to the Principal for the execution of strategic and operational plans, policies, and budgets approved by the governing board.
f. Act as the school's primary legal authority and, as such, ensure that systems are in place for meeting all the school's legal and contractual obligations, including those arising from contracts and other legal commitments made in the school's name.
g. Act as the employing authority for all staff at the school, with responsibility for benchmarking and reviewing models related to remuneration, benefits, and conditions of employment.
h. Ensure compliance with all applicable federal and local laws, regulations, and policies related to schools.

i. Govern risk, information, and technology in a manner that supports the school in achieving its strategic objectives, in line with the ADEK Digital Policy.

j. Ensure that the school's buildings and facilities are constructed in line with the ADEK Buildings and Facilities Policy and in line with relevant laws and regulations of Abu Dhabi and the UAE.

k. Investigate formal complaints against the school and take appropriate action in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

l. Promote ethical values and practice in the school's plans and activities, in line with the UAE national identity and cultural values.

m. Actively engage in key school events.

n. Ensure the appointment of board members with specific responsibilities (e.g., safeguarding, inclusion), as per the requirements in other policies and as per ADEK's requirements.

o. Nurture partnerships between the school and the wider community.

2.10.3 Responsibilities in relation to the Principal:

a. Appoint and review the performance of the Principal, in line with the ADEK Employment Policy, and where required, dismiss the Principal after obtaining ADEK's approval.

b. Hold the Principal accountable for the effective implementation of board approved plans and policies, in line with the school's mission, vision, values, and approved budget.

c. Ensure that the Principal maintains an up-to-date master copy of all policies and procedures, in line with the ADEK Records Policy.

2.10.4 Responsibilities in relation to the governing board:

a. Monitor and evaluate its own performance and effectiveness as the governing body of the school.

b. Carry out its proceedings and duties in an ethical manner.

2.10.5 Responsibilities of the Chair: Facilitate the efficient and effective functioning of the governing board by:

a. Moderating discussions, ensuring that different perspectives are considered, and resolving conflicts.

b. Fostering a culture conducive to good governance, including a constructive working relationship between the Principal and other board members.

2.11 Ethical Requirements:

2.11.1 Liwa Schools communicate the following ethical requirements to their board members:

a. Board members are obliged to follow the ADEK Professional Code of Ethics, ADEK Values and Ethics Policy, ADEK Cultural Consideration Policy, ADEK Governance Policy, and Code of Conduct for Education Professionals in General Education (MoE, 2022) and associated school policies in performing their roles.

b. Board members are required to declare any personal interest that might be reasonably deemed to compromise impartiality, conflict with their duty as a member, and/or result in private benefit.

c. Prospective or existing board members are not authorized to give any financial or other gifts to existing board members. Members are not authorized to accept such gifts on behalf of themselves or the school to secure or maintain the membership of an individual on the governing board.

d. Board members are required to keep the content of governing board discussions strictly confidential other than that disclosed by the school. This requirement applies even after the end of a member's service term, provided disclosure is not legally required.

2.11.2 Liwa schools shall ensure that any suspected breach of the above requirements is formally investigated, and where a breach is found, the member in question is removed from the governing board.

2.12 The governing board shall conduct an annual review of its own effectiveness, by developing an internal self-evaluation framework, which includes feedback from the Principal (and other stakeholders as appropriate).

2.13 Governing board members serve in an honorary capacity and without remuneration, except for board-approved school-related expenses.

2.14 The governing board does not have a permanent office based at the school and shall not disrupt the regular operation of the school by visiting it daily.

3. When applying for an ADEK license (new/renewal), Liwa schools, as part of the Liwa Education group shall, as necessary, identify any relationship with the Liwa Education governing board including the following:

3.1 Organizational Structure

3.2 Corporate Board Membership

3.3 Accountability Mechanisms

3.4 Operational Mechanisms

3.5 Financial disclosures (e.g., percentage shared profit margin)

4. The Principal and Vice-Principal

4.1 The Principal has the highest authority in the school and is accountable to the governing board and committees. The Vice Principal is the Principal's deputy and stand-in during leave of absence and representative who supports the Principal's leadership role.

4.1.1 The Principal shall not be the school owner or one of its owners, directly, indirectly, or the owner's representative. The Principal shall not be a first- or second-degree relative to the school owner or one of its owners.

4.1.2 In line with the ADEK Staff Eligibility Policy, the Principal and Vice-Principal shall adhere to educational leadership standards and requirements.

4.1.3 Depending on the size and organization, Liwa schools may have more than 1 Vice Principal.

4.1.4 Liwa Schools shall have a succession plan to delegate the Principals' responsibilities to the designated Vice Principal and ensure the continuity of the school's operations in the case of leadership gaps, including sharing tasks to mitigate the risk of disruption should succession be activated, in line with the ADEK Employment Policy.

4.2 The Principal shall work under the governance of the Director of Schools to ensure all responsibilities to all parties are executed accurately and in a timely fashion

4.3 The Principal shall:

4.3.1 Prepare and submit documentation related to the school's governance (e.g., organizational structure, policies.) to the governing board for approval.

4.3.2 Keep the governing board informed and up to date about any directives and communication from ADEK.

4.3.3 Disclose any potential personal conflict of interest to the governing board in a timely manner and recuse themselves from situations giving rise to a perceived conflict of interest.

4.4 The Principal shall:

4.4.1 Be accountable for all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the school.

4.4.2 Lead the evaluation of the school's performance to identify priorities for continuous improvement and raising the standards of education, in line with the ADEK Quality Assurance Policy.

4.4.3 Provide instructional leadership and management and monitor teaching and learning.

4.4.4 Set and manage the school budget.

4.4.5 Follow up on the maintenance of school buildings, resources, and facilities.

4.4.6 Convey any directives and communication from ADEK to relevant members of the school community by acting as a mediator.

4.5 The Principal shall:

4.5.1 Have the authority to establish rules, procedures, and educational standards at the school consistent with ADEK's requirements.

4.5.2 Notify ADEK of any legal violation or any non-compliance identified by the governing board with the potential for serious impact within 24 hours of identification of such violation or non-compliance.

4.5.3 Act as the primary contact person for the school and as a communication channel between the school and ADEK. The principal is authorized to nominate a member of staff to manage this communication and ensure that logistical matters are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

4.5.4 Respond in a timely manner to any request from ADEK.

5. Committees

5.1 Liwa schools' governing board shall ensure the formation of the following mandatory committees:

a. School Complaints Committee, in line with the ADEK Compliance Policy.
b. School Development Committee, in line with the ADEK Quality Assurance Policy.
c. Behavioral Management Committee, in line with the ADEK Student Behavior Policy.
d. School Health and Safety Committee, in line with the ADEK Health and Safety Policy.
e. School National Identity Committee, composed of at least 3 UAE National parents, dedicated to promoting UAE national identity and culture in schools.
f. Any other committee required by ADEK school policies

5.2 Liwa schools' governing board may create either permanently, or a task/finish group, any other committee that they deem necessary to support them in the discharge of their duties

5.3 The governing board shall determine the membership and terms of reference of these committees.

6. Records

6.1 Liwa schools shall ensure that all minutes of the meetings of the governing board are recorded and made available to ADEK on request and shall publish any relevant decisions made by the governing board that affect relevant stakeholders.

7. Compliance

7.1 This policy is effective August 2024. Compliance will take place throughout the academic year, full compliance by August 2025

This policy is fully aligned with the ADEK School Governance Policy published 2024.

Policy Owner Department

Education Department

Key Stakeholders		
Policy Owner:	School Principal	LISQ Principal
Reviewed by:	Margaret Haynes	Director of Schools
	Kevin Wallis	Deputy CEO
Approved by:	Dr. Shereen Gobran	Chief Executive Officer